



TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS

NEWSLETTER

TO ENCOURAGE THE OBSERVATION AND STUDY OF THE BIRDS OF THE TOOWOOMBA AREA

November 2025

EDITION 518

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Brown Cuckoo-Dove



Photo by Kathy Bowly

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OUTINGS & EVENTS 2025

The Toowoomba Bird Observers Newsletter is published monthly.

The deadline for the next Newsletter is 20th December 2025

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Saturday
6th December

**Breakfast with the Birds
Highfields**
Tony & Jennie Bond

Wednesday
14th December

Picnic Point, Toowoomba
Kathy Bowly

PLEASE CONTACT THE LEADER IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO OUR TBO MEMBERS



EARLY BIRD BREAKFAST

LOCATION: Highfields

Date: Saturday, 6th December 2024

Hosts: Tony & Jennie Bond

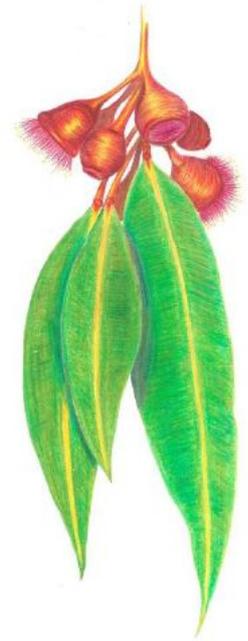
Address: 9 Tara Court, Highfields

Times: 7am starting with bird walk along Williams Creek starting from 9 Tara Court, followed by breakfast

Other details: BYO food and chair. Tea, coffee and bread rolls are provided, BBQ available.

RSVP: Friday, Midday 5th December 2025, for catering purposes
Tony 0412 638 406 or jtbond19b@protonmail.com

**In the event of inclement weather contact the relevant leader
*Closed footwear required in the field on all outings.***



MID WEEK WALK – December 2025

Picnic Point, Toowoomba

Date: Wednesday 14th December 2025

Co-ordinator: Kathy Bowly

Meeting Location: Stevenson St entry to Picnic Point, which is accessed via Old Tollbar Road <https://maps.app.goo.gl/ySsLuFhcmC7CLPke6>

Time: 7.30am

Other Details: Moderate walk. Closed footwear required.
BYO morning tea.

RSVP: Tuesday 13th December Kathy Bowly 0429 200 726

**In the event of inclement weather contact the relevant leader
*Closed footwear required in the field on all outings.***

MID WEEK OUTING NOVEMBER 2025

Waterbird Habitat 12th November 2025

Text and Photos by Tony Bond

Wednesday 12th November was a clear sunny spring day, perfect for an early morning stroll. The day would normally have been the next of Charles Dove's midweek walks, but unfortunately, having a sick note from his doctor, Charles was not able to attend, and we had to look after ourselves on this occasion. A small team of six birders took up the challenge and logged 42 birds, after some last-minute adjustments.

We commenced at 0730 from the carpark outside the Waterbird Habitat in McKenzie Street. The first thing we noticed was damage remaining from the recent storms. Council had tied danger tape across access to the small bridge into the Casuarina area where a tree had fallen. The main picnic shelter inside the park was also partly closed and taped off due to damage.



Cattle Egret

Resident birds were very active and there was plenty of opportunity for photographers to practise "Birds in Flight" skills with dozens of Ibis, Egrets, Cormorants and Crows in the air at any time.

We did not enter the park immediately but crossed McKenzie Street and followed the shared path along East Creek towards the large "Wagner" bridge.

At the start we were greeted by Willie Wagtail, Spotted Doves, Rainbow Lorikeets, Scaly-breasted Lorikeets, Magpie-larks, Masked Plovers and Noisy Miners among others. A solitary male Superb Fairywren flew up and rested on a TV antenna. Recent rains meant that the grass near the creek was very boggy in



Spotted Dove



Satin Bowerbird

places, although it was possible to get closer by taking care. We were rewarded with Purple Swamphens, Eurasian Coots, Dusky Moorhens (including a very fluffy chick), several Satin Bowerbirds, Golden Whistler (f), and White-browed Scrubwren. The Bowerbirds were mostly females, but we did spot a male racing through on a couple of occasions and we also saw a female go to her nest. We did not locate a bower but suspect there would have been one close by.

There were actually quite a few birds in the bush alongside the creek, but often very shy and only showed us head and shoulders before dropping back behind the thick foliage. Further along we found Noisy Friarbirds, Laughing Kookaburra, Currawong and Silvereyes.



Straw-necked Ibis

After crossing the bridge, we headed back towards the start when four Pale-headed Rosellas flew out of the bushes ahead. A large flock of Straw-necked Ibis circled very high up, alternately being visible and invisible as they turned in and out of the sun.

Pausing by tall grasses at the small pond next to McKenzie Street, we pondered that this was a good location to see Golden-headed Cisticolas or possibly Australian Reed Warblers as both have been seen here previously. As we watched, two reed warblers flew along the water edge at grass-top height then, just as quickly, dropped out



Pied Currawong

of sight. It only took a second but three people saw them!! Afterwards we heard a call, and shortly afterwards they flew again, but this time into the middle of the thick long grass.



Golden Whistler

They landed in plain sight for just a second then dropped down and were never seen or heard again. Despite cameras being at the ready no-one got a picture.

We adjourned to the picnic shelter in the park for morning tea, where we shared the table with a lone visitor to Toowoomba who was having a day off from shift working. He was very interested in the birds and what we were doing and we gave him several other suggestions to visit.

We logged 40 birds at the time (thanks Jennie), while one more (Little Black Cormorant) was spotted by Kathy and Tim as they left, making 41. During the walk there had been a discussion regarding a female Golden Whistler (was it, wasn't it??). An enlarged photo was emailed to Charles for his expert opinion, and he confirmed we were correct - Golden Whistler it was!! One further last-minute adjustment to the list was White-browed Scrubwren which somehow got missed - making 42 for the day.

It was very pleasant morning of spotting in good company.



Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike by Tim Bowly

Waterbird Habitat		November 12 th 2025		42 species
Australian Wood Duck	Cattle Egret	Satin Bowerbird	Pied Currawong	
Pacific Black Duck	Little Egret	Superb Fairy-wren	Grey Butcherbird	
Rock Dove	Little Pied Cormorant	Brown Honeyeater	Willie Wagtail	
Spotted Dove	Little Black Cormorant	Blue-faced Honeyeater	Magpie-lark	
Crested Pigeon	Masked Lapwing	Noisy Friarbird	Torresian Crow	
Eastern Koel	Laughing Kookaburra	Noisy Miner	Australian Reed-Warbler	
Purple Swamphen	Galah	White-browed Scrubwren	Welcome Swallow	
Dusky Moorhen	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Silvereye	
Eurasian Coot	Pale-headed Rosella	Olive-backed Oriole	Common Myna	
Australian White Ibis	Rainbow Lorikeet	Golden Whistler		
Straw-necked Ibis	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike		



Wompoo Magic with Tony Bond

Recently we found ourselves with a morning to spare in the Noosa area. We decided to visit Noosa Botanical Gardens and came across two Wompoo Fruit-doves in the rainforest section. The two were plainly a “pair”. We saw one pick green twigs and present them to the other as a gift. Having exchanged several twigs, they snuggled together for about 20 seconds in a neck-to-neck embrace with eyes closed – enjoying the moment. This performance was repeated several times. Most of the time they were part hidden by foliage but their brilliant colours occasionally caught the morning sun.



Finally, they took flight directly over our heads. We watched them land again nearby but they stayed apart in their new tree and we left them to go about their day. I've only seen these birds from a distance previously so this was a truly magical experience.

We spotted many other birds on our walk. Noosa Botanical Gardens is not very big but in our experience is well worth a visit if you're at a loose end in that area.



Just let me sleep!!

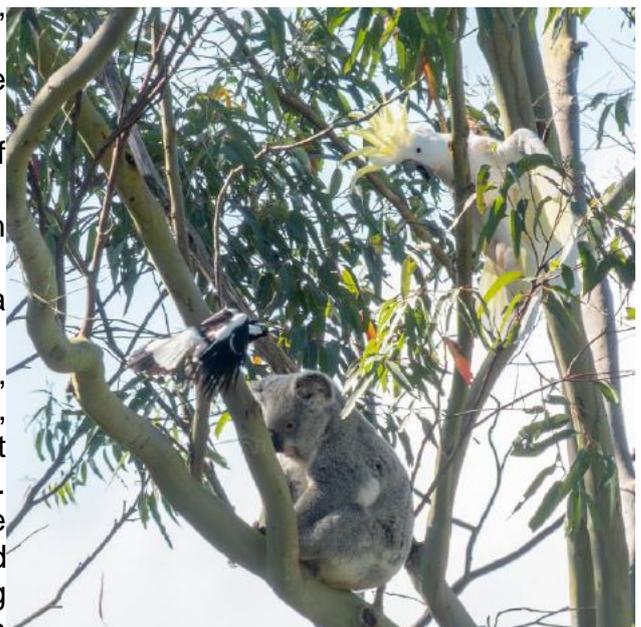
by Joe and Sue Scanlan

In mid-September we were excited to see a young, healthy koala in the gum trees in our back yard. It stayed around for a few days and we enjoyed its presence. It then moved on.

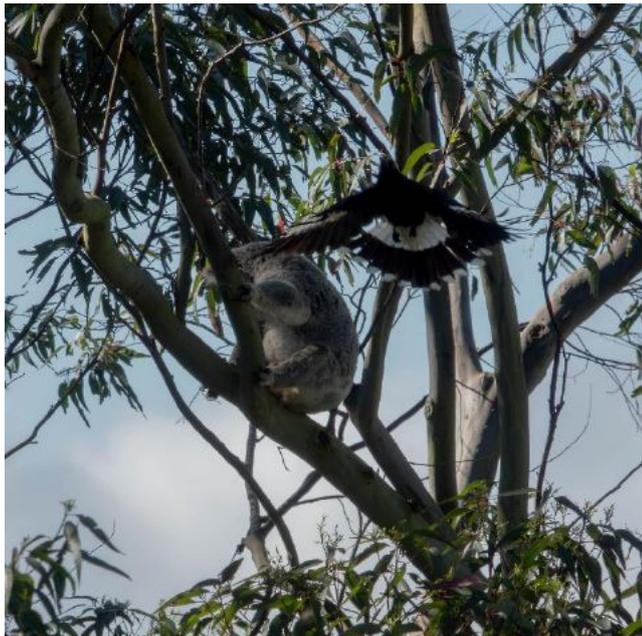
About two weeks later, we heard a number of different birds making a commotion in one of the trees. We went outside, expecting to find a python or perhaps a boobook owl in the trees.

Eventually, we saw that the birds were making a fuss about "our" koala.

We saw the usual suspects (Pied Currawong, Lewin's Honeyeater, Noisy Friarbird, Magpie Lark, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Noisy Miner) all diving at the poor koala while it was trying to have a nap. Some of them even hit it on the head. But more surprising to us was that the Sulphur-crested Cockatoos were making a terrible squawking racket near the koala. Initially the poor koala climbed very high into the tops of the gum tree where the foliage was denser. The birds quietened down. Sometime later, we saw the koala coming back down and it moved away.



We have seen a few koalas in our neighbours' trees and at Highfields Falls, but have not seen birds annoying any of them. Annoying snakes and owls make sense, but why would birds like cockatoos be irritated/threatened by a koala??



TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS ANNUAL BIRD SPECIES CENSUS

25 October to 3 November 2025

This year the October Census was extended and ran from 25 October to 3 November. An incredible 181 species were seen and all 20 sectors were surveyed. Species of interest included Pallid Cuckoo, Spotless Crake, Banded Lapwing, Nankeen Night-Heron, Intermediate Egret, Little Egret, Glossy Ibis, Pied Cormorant, Powerful Owl, Black Falcon, Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Red-winged Parrot, Blue Bonnet, White-winged Fairy-wren (in an amazing seven sectors), Yellow-throated Miner, Dusky Woodswallow, Satin Flycatcher, White-eared Monarch, Plum-headed Finch, Russet-tailed Thrush and Common Blackbird.

Participating members included Michael Atzeni, Linda Barton, Olive Booth, Ross and Margaret Easton, Marie Gittins, Michael Hare, Philippa Harvey, Averil Hawthorne, Col Hughes, Roger Jaensch, Pat McConnell, Kath O'Donnell, Gerrie Pryce-Davies, Donna Purcell, Claudia Stephenson, Eduarda van Klinken and Lesley Walker.

The map shows sectors in which the species were recorded over the census period. The census data is recorded in the table which is attached as a PDF with the November newsletter.

The Records Officer would like to thank all those who participated.

Pat McConnell – Records Officer



Spotting Scope Donation

Peter Watts and Shelly Grist have generously donated their near-new Celestron Regal M2 80ED spotting scope to the club. It comes with a Universal Digiscoping Smartphone Adapter.

Please contact Mick Atzeni if you would like to borrow it.

Thank you very much, Peter and Shelly!!

Birds of a Feather Flock Together

The list goes on:

A mob of emus
A pretence of bitterns
A cote of doves
A congress of eagles
A rookery of albatross



*Emus cooling off at Currawinya National Park
by Kathy Bowly*

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Text/photos courtesy of <https://www.birdsinbackyards.net>

Brown Cuckoo-Dove

Scientific Name: *Macropygia phasianella*

Atlas Number: 29

What does it look like?

Description:

The Brown Cuckoo-Dove is a large brown pigeon of rainforests, with a very long, tapering tail. There is a pale streak below the blue-grey eye and a red eye-ring. The female has a brighter chestnut cap and a scaly pattern on the breast. The legs and feet are red. Their flight is strong and graceful, usually low among the trees. This species is also known as the Brown, Pheasant or Large-tailed Pigeon.

Similar species:

The large size and graduated tail distinguishes the Brown Cuckoo-Dove from any other pigeon in the region.



Where does it live?

Distribution:

The Brown Cuckoo-Dove is found throughout north-eastern and eastern Queensland, including off-shore islands, and eastern coastal areas of New South Wales. Its range is expanding down the coast of New South

Wales. This species is also found from the Philippines, south through Borneo to Sumatra, through the Moluccas and Sulawesi to New Guinea.

Habitat:

This is a pigeon of rainforests and wet sclerophyll forest, particularly at the forest edges, along creeks and rivers. Brown Cuckoo-Doves are often found in regrowth along roads, in clearings and in weedy areas like lantana.

Seasonal movements:

No large-scale seasonal movement but move locally in search of fruit.

What does it do?

Feeding:

Brown Cuckoo-Doves feed on fruit, berries and seeds from a variety of rainforest trees, shrubs and vines. They usually feed in the trees in the early morning and the late afternoon, often hanging upside down to reach fruit. They come to the ground to drink and to eat grit. They can digest very hard seeds.



Breeding:

Brown Cuckoo-Doves nest in rainforest trees, shrubs and the tops of vines and ferns, with the nest being a scanty collection of twigs and sticks placed sideways on a branch. The young are covered with long thick down when first hatched. Both parents share the incubation and care of the young.

Living with us

Brown Cuckoo-Doves may benefit from disturbance to habitat by logging and track-making. They appear to be spreading south down the east coast.

Did you know?

The very long graduated tail helps the Brown Cuckoo-Dove to balance as it hangs from branches and moves in the canopy, searching for fruit.

Calls

The call is a haunting and distinctive 'coo-cu-woot' rising at the end. Sounds like: 'did you walk?'

LINKS OF INTEREST

Prescribed burn in Western Australian national park further endangers black cockatoo numbers. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-11-24/prescribed-burn-lit-in-endangered-cockatoo-habitat/106041070>

The timing of a prescribed burn in the Mt Roe National Park was not ideal for the nesting Carnaby's and Baudin's Black Cockatoos with fire, smoke and abandonment all potential threats to newly hatched chicks.

East Asian-Australasian Flyway of migratory birds secures funding for Philippines wetlands.

<https://www.birdlife.org/news/2025/11/20/commitments-to-wetlands-in-the-philippines-bring-hope-for-migratory-birds/>

Funding of important wetlands in the Philippines will help facilitate the migration of hundreds of thousands migratory birds as they find their way from Siberia to Australia and back again, offering them a place to rest and feed on their incredible journeys.

Are our parrots and cockatoos survivors?

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-11-29/parrots-of-australia-a-spotters-guide/106056012>

Australia has 42 species of parrots and 14 species of cockatoos but which are thriving and which are barely surviving. While some species are very adaptable to change others are specialist who have struggled with the impact of habitat changes over the last couple of centuries.

Birds are the true gardeners of an Icelandic island which emerged in 1963.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2025/11/251104094148.htm>

The main agents of plant colonization of the volcanic island of Surtsey off Iceland appear to be gulls, geese, and shorebirds, which carried seeds in their digestive systems or droppings.

We have lift -off!

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2025/nov/16/we-have-lift-off-melbournes-skyscraper-peregrine-chicks-take-to-the-sky#:~:text=The%20three%20peregrine%20chicks%20hatched,once%20they%20have%20taken%20flight>

Did you catch the launch of Melbourne's Peregrine Falcon chicks? Check out the trios take off from the 35th floor of their building in the CBD.

We wish you a merry Christmas

